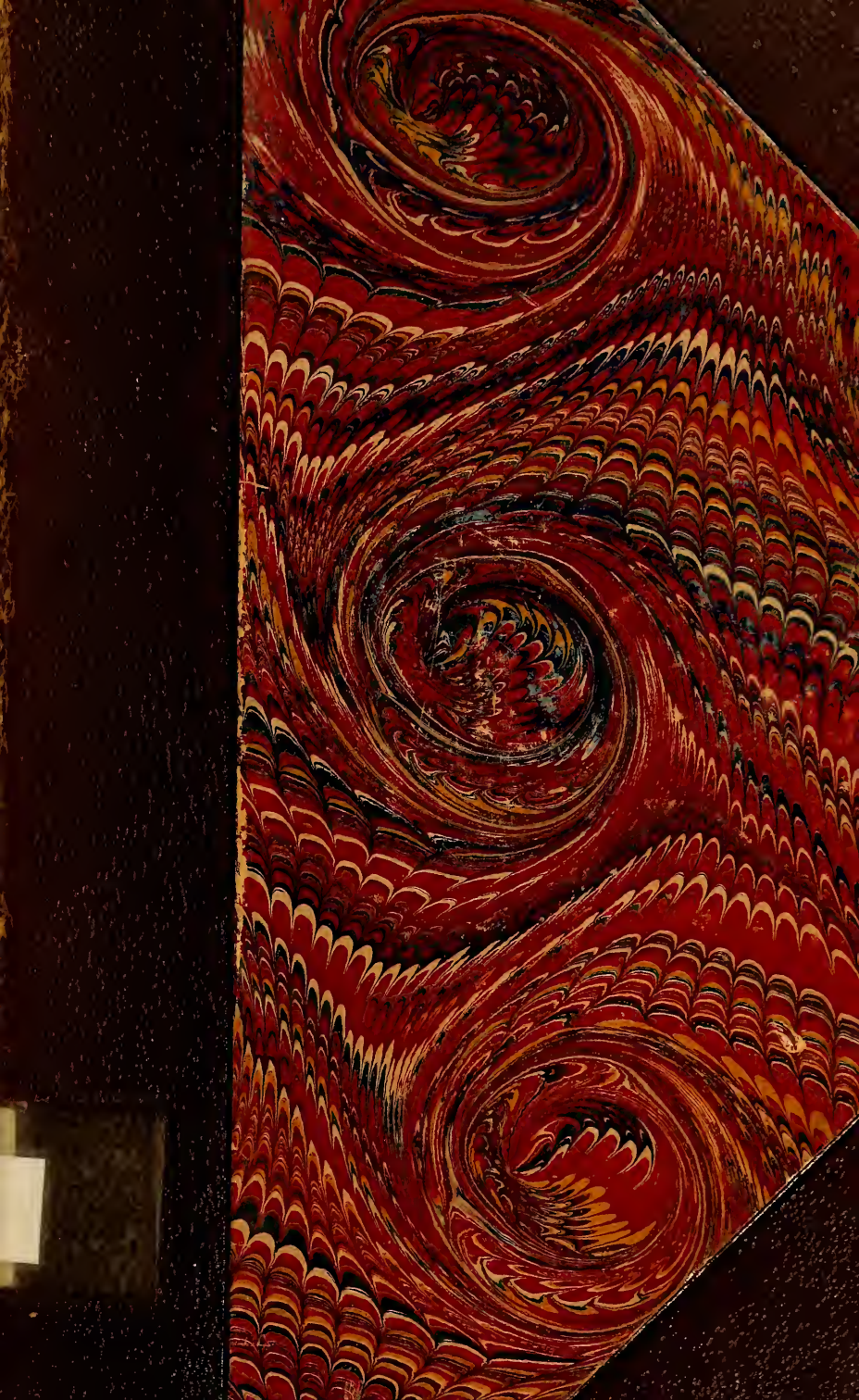




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The Blind.

OCCASIONAL PAPER.

No. II.

JULY 20TH, 1900.

All communications for the next number must be sent on or before September 20th, to Mr. Henry J. Wilson, Hon. Editor, 53, Victoria Street, Westminster, London, S.W.

The Editor does not of necessity identify himself with opinions which may be expressed in the signed articles or in letters of correspondents, and the right is reserved of not printing any letter which may seem not to come within the limits of a discussion likely to be profitable. Letters must be accompanied by the writer's name and address, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.

Copies of this Paper, price 3d. each, or 3½d. post free, can be obtained from the Editor.

EDITORIAL.

It is with the deepest regret that we have to announce that since our last issue, the Blind and those who work for them, have lost, by the death of Mr. A. Buckle, a staunch and valued friend whom all respected, and whose opinion was always attentively listened to because it was invariably sound and convincing. The Very Rev. the Dean of York, who has had many opportunities of seeing Mr. Buckle's long and devoted service and can speak with greater authority than most men on his loving and earnest work on behalf of the Blind, has most kindly written, by special request, an obituary notice for this paper (v. page 195). Mr. Buckle, as our readers know, has contributed to these pages some very valuable articles, and we shall much miss his sympathetic and ever ready help in our endeavours to bring together the scattered fragments of information about the Blind and to further their interests.

The article on "The National Blind Relief Society" is written by Miss Rhoda Broughton, the well-known novelist, and "Blindness in Palestine" by Sir Charles Wilson, whose observations on this subject are not those of the mere casual visitor or tourist in Palestine, he having passed many years there conducting explorations in conjunction with Sir Charles Warren and others,

The Hon. Mrs. Campion has kindly consented to write an article for our next number on handloom and tapestry weaving, an employment in which the elder blind girls at the Barclay Home at Brighton are engaged, and we hope also that an article will appear on "The Poor Adult Blind Society."

HENRY J. WILSON.

NOTES.

1. The readers of "Progress" will regret to hear that Mr. J. L. Shadwell has, owing to ill-health, been reluctantly compelled to resign the post of Hon. Editor, after ten years service. It was towards the close of the year 1890, that he first took over the Editorship on the lamented death of that great benefactor of the Blind, Dr. T. R. Armitage; and since that time he has laboured unceasingly to keep the Magazine up to that high standard of excellence it attained under its first Editor. "Progress" was started to supply information concerning the Blind, which they could not obtain elsewhere. This plan has been gradually discarded, since it has become evident to those who are responsible for the publication of "Progress" that the Blind prefer to find in its pages articles of every day interest, rather than those that deal exclusively with their own doings and efforts.

It has been decided by the Council of the British and Foreign Blind Association that "Progress" shall not, in future, be confined to 20 pages, and that Mr. G. W. Boyle, the eldest son of Mr. G. R. Boyle, shall be its editor in place of Mr. Shadwell.

Since writing the above paragraphs and just on going to press, we have heard with much regret that Mr. Shadwell died suddenly on Sunday evening, July 1st.

2. Mr. Arthur Dexter, who has recently been in for his final Examination at Oxford, and to whom we wish all success, has presented the Library of the "Gardner Trust" with 5 vols. in Braille, viz: Tacitus Annals 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, Appian's Civil Wars and Aristotelean Logic.

3. Lincolnshire can boast of two blind men in important positions. The Vicar of Sutton Bridge is not only blind, but unable to walk owing to paralysis. Nevertheless, he performs all his duties and preaches eloquent sermons from his chair in which he is wheeled to Church every Sunday. Mr. Charles Smith has been recently elected Chairman of the Sutton Bridge Urban District Council, which position entitles him to act as Magistrate for the Holland Division of Lincolnshire.

4. We have to gratefully acknowledge the receipt of the Report of the State Board of Education to the General Court of Massachusetts, U.S.A., "relative to the instruction of the adult blind at their homes." We hope to review it in our next number.

5. We regret to announce the death of Mr. James Taylor, who lost his sight by the accidental discharge of a gun. In 1892 he became a student at the Worcester Blind College, and at the end of a year he left as head boy. He distinguished himself, as a lawyer, in Dublin.

6. We are pleased to hear that Mr. P. Hart-Dyke, after twenty years of blindness, has partially recovered his sight by the skill of Mr. Critchett. We understand, however, that the regained sight is not sufficient to enable him to read, but only to distinguish large objects.

7. Mr. Carl Gilbert Hardebeck, whose motet was performed at the Concert given for the Hospital Ship "Maine," has gained prizes three consecutive years in the competitions of the *Eeis Ceoil* at Dublin. For the first two competitions, the judges were Professor Prout and Professor Stanford. Last year he was awarded by Sir Walter Parratt, three first prizes for an Anthem, a Sonata for Violin and Piano, and a Part Song. An interesting account of his life was given in "The Musical Age" for December last. Mr. Hardebeck went to the Royal Normal College when he was twelve years of age, and it must indeed be highly gratifying to Dr. Campbell to find one of his pupils so

distinguished in the art of music, and to know that Mr. Hardebeck attributes his success to the sound and thorough instruction he received at the College.

8. In reference to the article, "Dreams of the Blind," mentioned in our last number, paragraph 25, we have received a courteous letter from Mr. Albert M. Jones, of the Perkins Institute for the Blind, South Boston, Mass., U.S.A., in which he says that what is presumably the same article was written by Professor J. Jastrow, and appeared in 1888 in "The New Princeton Review," New York. Mr. Jones kindly sent a copy of the Magazine to the Editor, but the article is different from the one in "Le Valentin Haüy," although the title is the same.

9. The London School Board have purchased Elm Court, Tulse Hill, for a central day school for blind children, at an inclusive price of £4600.

10. The Stainsby-Wayne embossed shorthand typewriter, manufactured by Alfred Wayne & Co., 55, Church Hill Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, can now be purchased for £6, or 12 machines for £5 5s. each. It is entirely automatic, the operator having absolutely nothing to do but to press the keys. The matter is recorded on a roll of paper, which travels along a tray and into a basket, the paper being automatically pulled forward at each depression of the keys. By this machine blind persons can take down verbatim reports at a high speed—as much as 140 words having been recorded per minute. The machine is very strong, nicely adjusted, and well finished in black japan. It writes the ordinary Braille system, although it was specially designed for writing shorthand. One of the typewriters is now being shown at the Paris Exhibition, and we are of opinion that the machine will prove of the highest value in developing another remunerative employment for the Blind. Its simplicity is most advantageous, and reflects great credit on the designers.

11. Most people are presumably agreed as to the inadvisability of the blind intermarrying, and are in accord with the

recommendation in the Report of the Royal Commission on the Blind, the Deaf, Dumb, &c., "that the intermarriage of the blind should be strongly discouraged." It is, therefore, with feelings of much regret that we have to record that in Hull there are no less than twelve blind married couples, mostly with families.

12. In reply to a question about Typewriters in No 5, we have to thank Mr. J. W. Tighe, Principal of the Jubilee Institute for the Blind, Parnell, Auckland, New Zealand, for a description of the Merritt Typewriter, adapted by himself for use in his Institution.

13. The London Home Teaching Society for the Blind has moved its office from 47 to 53, Victoria Street, S.W.

14. From statistics recently compiled, it appears that there are 302,000 blind persons in Europe, and that of these no less than 192,000 live in Russia. That is to say that in Russia the percentage of blind persons is 1 in 500, whereas in Great Britain, France, Germany, and Italy, it is only 1 in 1000. Russian oculists state that most of the cases of blindness are due to the unhealthy condition of the homes, and the neglect of the ordinary laws of hygiene.

15. A patent basket modeller and gauge has been invented by Mr. Thomas Taylor, the Superintendent of the School for the Indigent Blind, Hardman Street, Liverpool. The apparatus consists of a base board of wood, drilled with holes, which receive steel pins. By this means the basket, whether square, oblong, round, or oval, assumes an accurate shape, and the worker forms the sides of the baskets by interweaving the guide pins. The modellers are made in three sizes—full particulars can be obtained from Mr. Taylor.

16. Those who are interested in embossed shorthand for the Blind, should write to the Secretary of the General Institution for the Blind, Edgbaston, Birmingham, for a copy of his

article which appeared in No. 6 of "The Blind." The article is revised up to April last, and is circulated free. Copies in Braille can be obtained from Mr. W. H. Illingworth, School for the Blind, West Craigmillar, Edinburgh. Price 6d. each, post free.

17. The following books have been added to the Library at Oxford:—The second and third parts of Shakespeare's "Henry the Sixth," Freeman's "General Sketch of European History," the second part of Hobbs' "Leviathan," and the Report of the Royal Commission on the Blind.

18. By the kind permission of the Committee of the Gardner Trust, a meeting was held on July 4th, in their offices, on the invitation of Dr. Fletcher Little, in order to consider the desirability of taking steps to organise the work of "Massage" by the Blind on a proper basis. The chair was taken by Dr. Little, and there were present—Mrs. MacNicol, Sister E. S. Keerison, Dr. and Mrs. Gale, Messrs. Henry Power, Kenneth Scott, Walford, Chater, F. O. Smithers, J. T. Edmonds, Dr. Ranger, and others.

The chairman made an interesting speech in introducing the subject, and stated that he was perfectly satisfied with the results of his training the blind as masseurs and masseuses, and that they were quite as capable and as good in this particular work as those who can see. On the motion of Mr. F. O. Smithers, seconded by Mr. Henry Power, it was resolved, "That the practice of massage offers a remunerative field for the employment of the Blind, and that it is desirable that steps be taken to organize the work on a proper basis." It was further resolved that those present do form a committee with power to add to their number. It was also arranged that another meeting should be held in a fortnight to go more into the details of the scheme. Mr. F. T. Chater, The Oxford House, Bethnal Green, E. kindly consented to act as Hon. Sec. *pro tem*.

19. The fifty-third annual meeting of the General Institution for the Blind at Edgbaston, Birmingham, was held on June

26th, when the Lord Mayor presided. The report for the year ended March 31st last, is full of good work well done, and also what is very important, mention is made of the successful development of the new industries for the Blind, such as shorthand, typewriting, and cookery. The total number of blind persons receiving direct benefit from the Institution is 603, of whom 142 are resident pupils. An appeal will shortly be made on behalf of the proposed Kindergarten School. Twenty-four old pupils have been assisted from the Middlemore Trust. The sales, amounting to £4905, show an increase of £598 over any previous year, whilst the wages to the Blind have risen to £1097, an increase of £176. Two blind women are employed at a weekly wage of 15/- each in the typewriting department, the gross receipts from which were £218, and two more women will soon be engaged. The embossed shorthand typewriting machine, invented by Mr. Stainsby, is thus already proving of the greatest value.

20. The annual meeting of the Yorkshire School for the Blind, was held on March 9th, when the Very Rev. the Dean of York was in the chair, and the sixty-second annual report, which is as usual a record of much good work, was read. The Superintendent's report will be read with the sad reflection that we shall receive no more of his able and interesting remarks. There were 66 pupils on the books on December 31st, 1899. Besides these, 17 basketmakers, 10 brushmakers, and 2 mattress-makers have been fully employed at York, and 5 at Middlesbrough. The sales amounted to £3,625, of which £109 worth was sold at Whitby, where 3 former pupils are at work. At the Industrial Home for Women, at Scarborough, 297 chairs were re-seated by the 8 inmates. The Markham Fund still continues its beneficent operations, and assisted 65 former pupils.

21. The thirty-sixth annual meeting of the Hull Blind Institution, was held on May 30th. The report states that the large scheme drawn out some years ago is now an accomplished fact. The accommodation and the warehouse room of the

workshops have been increased, the Sick Benefit and Entertainment Branch inaugurated, and the Home for Blind Women opened, and the freehold premises are free of debt. The workers numbered 31, the wages amounted to £869, and the sales to £1,815, an excess of £345 over the previous year. The Blind of Hull owe a deep debt of gratitude to Dr. Rockcliffe, who retires after having served, as Hon. Sec., for seventeen years, and who has devoted so much time and attention in bringing the Institution into such a satisfactory position, financial and otherwise.

22. The Wolverhampton Society for the Blind held its annual meeting on May 2nd, when the Mayor presided. The twenty-fifth annual report states that there are 68 blind people regularly, and 24 occasionally, visited in the town and district. Fancy basketwork is being taught to the blind women. The receipts from sales amounted to £1443, just £100 more than last year. The subscriptions were £128, and the contributions towards the New Workshops, which were formally opened on April 11th, 1899, by the Earl and Countess of Dartmouth, £1,470, leaving a deficiency thereon of £356. The workshops are of two storeys, will accommodate 30 workmen, and have cost £2143. Legacies amounting to £442 10s. have been capitalized to form an endowment fund.

23. The sixty-second annual meeting of the London Society for Teaching the Blind, Upper Avenue Road, N.W., was held on May 5th, when the Right Hon. the Earl of Mansfield presided. The pupils number 67 (33 boys and 34 girls). Type-writing has been introduced, and a machine for embossing books has been purchased.

24. The fortieth annual meeting of the Association for Promoting the General Welfare of the Blind, 258, Tottenham Court Road, W., was held on June 21st. This Association was founded in 1856, by Miss Gilbert, the blind daughter of Bishop Gilbert, of Chichester. During the past year the loss in the Industrial

Department amounted to £924. £328 were paid in pensions and gifts; 17 men brushmakers, 16 basketmakers, 1 matmaker, 1 chair caner, and 6 firewood choppers were employed, and also 19 women on brushmaking and chair caning. The daily average attendance of workers was 60, and the amount paid to the blind, as wages, was £2,091. There were also 13 pupils under instruction. The sales amounted to £10,793.

25. The 106th annual meeting of the Bristol Asylum for the Blind took place on May 3rd, when the Lord Mayor presided. At the end of 1899 there were 71 inmates—45 males, 26 females—of whom 20 were over 16 years of age. The Inspector reports that the appointment of a resident master and the reorganization of the classes have proved of distinct benefit. The trade account shows a larger turnover than at any former period, the sales amounting to £1196. The 17 blind outworkers received £478 in wages.

26. The annual meeting of the Association for Home Teaching and Industrial Employment of the Blind, 65, Park Street, Bristol, was held on March 5th. Mr. J. R. Bennett, J.P., was chairman. The forty-first annual report was read for the year ended December 31st, 1899. Besides the visits paid to nearly 300 blind people by the three blind teachers, 28 blind women, living at their own homes, found employment at the Institution all the year round, and received £225 in wages. The sales amounted to only £421, being £100 less than last year, and it was necessary to realise £50 of the Investments.

27. The twentieth anniversary of the Homes for Aged Christian Blind Men and Women, Hanley Road, Crouch Hill, N., was held on May 31st. Mr. and Mrs. Bright, the hon. superintendents and founders of the Homes, are to be congratulated on ending the financial year with a small balance in hand, and with the extensive freehold premises completely free from debt. There are at present 95 inmates in the Homes (15 men and 80 women), and 5 at the branch Home at Southend.

28. The Report of the School for the Indigent Blind at Liverpool, refers to the opening of the new School at Wavertree, on January 12th, 1899, where there is accommodation for 84 children. The old school buildings in Hardman Street are now used exclusively for adults. There is still a debt of £900 on the new buildings. Miss Hornby has presented to the School a valuable Library consisting of books in Braille. On December 31st, 1899, there were 85 pupils in the old and 71 in the new School.

29. The Annual Meeting of the Bolton Workshop for the Blind was held on May 23rd. The Production of machine brushes has now become a part of the trade. There were constantly employed during last year 23 men and 2 women.

30. The Annual Meeting of the Catholic Blind Asylum at Liverpool was held on June 11th, when the 58th Annual Report was read. The building of the Supplementary School at West Derby was begun in March and will probably be opened in the Autumn. On December 31st, 1899 there were 175 inmates, 91 adults and 84 children. The receipts showed an increase in nearly all items, especially in the sales at the shop, and the proceeds from the Annual Bazaar.

THE ROYAL NORMAL COLLEGE CONCERT AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

In these days of "hurrying life" and quickly succeeding interests it seems a far cry back to the 4th of April, even in this present year, but it is impossible to pass by without a word of admiring comment, the concert to which reference was made in paragraph 5 of our last number, given on that date at the Crystal Palace, by the Royal Normal College for the Blind, in aid of the American Hospital Ship *Maine*, under the gracious patronage of Her Majesty the Queen, and H.R.H. Princess Louise. In saying that Mr. Manns and his orchestra accompanied the performances of the artistes and students of

the Normal College, and that Madame Albani and Mr. Watkin Mills contributed to the programme, all that is necessary to the comprehension of anyone with the most elementary knowledge of music is said. A word, however, must be added as to the great enthusiasm created by Mr. W. Mills in taking the solo of Dr. Faning's "Obedient to the Call," and joining heartily with the Choir in the chorus. The Crystal Palace Directors kindly granted the use of the Concert Room and Orchestra. Mr. Manns conducted the Palace Orchestra with his inimitable skill in the second movement from Dvorak's Symphony, "The New World," and all the vocal selections, except the unaccompanied Part Songs conducted by Dr. Campbell, and "For Queen and Country," specially orchestrated for this concert, and conducted by the Composer, Mr. W. H. Cummings. Great interest and pleasure were manifested by the audience in a motet called "The *Maine*—Sail on, Good Ship," composed for the occasion by Carl von Hardebeck, many years a student of the Normal College, and now an organist and teacher at Belfast, and also in a delightful polonaise for piano and orchestra, written by Leonard Pegg, a boy student, now training under Dr. Campbell, who took the piano part in the most masterly manner. A duet for two pianofortes was extremely well rendered by Miss Mabel Davis and Miss Emily Lucas. The other Soloists were Miss L. Eglinton, Miss A. Campbell, Miss Carson, Miss A. Smith, Messrs. R. Boulcott Newth, H. Balfour, Wm. Cleverley, and Horace Watling. The singing of the Choir could not be surpassed for precision of attack and richness, and delicacy of tone and shading. The impassioned singing of "God Save the Queen," and "The Star Spangled Banner," raised feelings of emotion almost inimical to the power of song, perhaps more clearly to be described by the common or garden name of "a lump in the throat." We congratulate all concerned in the arrangement of this concert on their complete success as to its musical results. The entire proceeds were given to the Fund of the Hospital Ship *Maine*. *The Times*, in an appreciatory article, remarks that "the Choir displayed in all its performances a richness of tone and an accuracy of phrasing that were most commendable."

ANTHONY BUCKLE,

BY THE VERY REV. THE DEAN OF YORK.

It is a rare privilege indeed to have been long and intimately associated with a character such as that of the late Mr. Buckle. Many perhaps have had some one salient quality more brilliant than any which he possessed, but few I think have been gifted with so many, and each of them of so high an order. It is almost unique to find a man of decided æsthetic temperament equally ready and capable in details of purely, even common-place, matters of business, and to notice in one who had so many elements of genius, that methodical habit of life which seemed to treat everything with strictly matter-of-fact regularity and attention. But above all, it is, at least not common to find a whole life subordinate to a distinct recognition of and dependence on an ever present, ever guiding Providence, in whom, and through whom, and for whom, all was to be attempted, continued, and completed.

It seemed natural in Mr. Buckle to be equally and quietly "at home" in matters not only dissimilar, but sometimes antagonistic, to peruse with him, his accounts so clearly stated, so legibly written, or to listen to his ready estimate of the cost of material and their manipulation, and eventual sale and profit, or to hear him describe some detail of household management which he had established, and then, to turn with him to examine some graphic sketches of sea and cliff, or hill and river, or some brilliant atmospheric effects of sunlight and clouds, or soft contrasts of moonlight and shadows, or some calm lake scene, with the smooth waters reflecting the evening glow in the sky above, and backed with mountains already darkened with the gloom of evening; or some carefully executed

etchings on Copper or Mezzotint engraving, designed, executed, and printed off by his own hands, or to receive a touching sonnet suggested by some passing event, or by a passage of Scripture which he had heard at Church, or read himself in his daily study of the Word of God, or translated from German or Danish, with both which languages he was well acquainted. Nothing could be more delightful than to see him in his intercourse with the blind inmates of the "King's Manor House," his interesting tenderness towards the very young, his genial cheery address to the elder members and the "Outmates," many of whom had passed a life-time in working under his superintendence. It was always pleasant to notice, the intense interest which he seemed to take in the circumstances of each—his knowledge of their particular wants and character—his anxiety to promote their comfort and happiness in the administration of "The Markham Fund;" he always seemed to know what was most needful for the blind in their first start in life, or in the difficulties and troubles which they were meeting in their different callings, not only in the city, but in distant parts of the world; or again his readiness to establish branch institutions at Scarboro' and Middlesboro', where those resident in those districts could obtain training or employment. Above all, nothing was more impressive than to watch him guiding a long string of his pupils and his choir to the Minster, and then kneeling down at the altar rails to receive with them the hallowed tokens of the bread of life. Truly a great, a useful, a beneficent character has passed to rest, leaving a void which can never be filled amongst us, but in its peace, and perseverance, and practical godliness, leaving an example which every one who is truly wise of heart will try to follow.

BLINDNESS IN PALESTINE.

By MAJOR-GEN. SIR CHARLES W. WILSON, K.C.B.,
R.E., F.R.S., &c.

The prevalence of blindness, and of diseases of the eye in Palestine and Egypt is well known. The blindness is in great part due to dirt, small pox, and ophthalmia. Bad diet, great fatigue, miasma and exposure to night dews appear to be predisposing causes of ophthalmia; and the contagion is often spread by flies. Blindness results from want of precaution and cleanliness, and from that apathy or fatalism which leads Moslems to neglect the use of proper remedies until it is too late. It is interesting to note that blindness is far less prevalent amongst the Bedawin, who live in the pure dry air of the desert, than it is amongst the peasantry and the town populations.

A French traveller, towards the close of last century, states that the proportion of blind in Egypt was 1 in 20; and even in a modern work of reference it is stated that there are 4,000 blind in Cairo, and that at Jaffa there are 500 blind out of a population of 5000. There are no statistics, but I think these estimates are a very serious exaggeration of the actual facts. My own experience would lead me to estimate the proportion of blind at not more than 1 in 500, and possibly only 1 in 700. The number of those who become blind is probably very much smaller than it was forty years ago. Ophthalmic Hospitals and Medical attendance, to a large extent gratuitous, are now available in the larger towns, and the numerous Missionary and other Schools have done much to inculcate habits of cleanliness amongst the native Christians. Unfortunately little has yet been done towards making the lives of the blind brighter and happier by educating them and teaching them trades.

Last year, whilst at Jerusalem, I was able to visit the British Ophthalmic Hospital belonging to the Grand Priory of the Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem in England; and a small residential institution for blind women and girls—the only one of its kind, I believe, in the country. The Hospital stands on that part of the road to Bethlehem which, since the opening

of the railway, has become the approach to the station. The traffic on this and other roads has added two unwelcome features to Jerusalem, deep mud in winter, and abundant dust in summer. Fortunately the wards and the operating room are below the level of the road and can be kept fairly free from dust ; but, during a high wind, the dust is a serious inconvenience in the upper rooms. The Resident Medical Officer is Dr. W. E. Cant, who is widely known for his skill as an operator ; and he and Mrs. Cant are highly esteemed throughout the country for their unremitting attention and unvarying kindness to the patients. It is hardly possible to exaggerate the excellence of the work which is being done by the Hospital or the benefits which it confers on the poor of Jerusalem, and of the Holy Land. In 1897 the number of in-patients admitted was 569, of out-patients, new cases, 4,640, of out-patients attendance, 12,881, and of operations 1,277. In his Report Dr. Cant writes :—"The patients are derived from all parts of Palestine ; the great majority of those admitted come from a distance. Under present circumstances only those needing operations can be admitted ; the greater part of these seek relief from the sequences of the disastrous ophthalmia of the country. There remain the thousands of cases, yearly, of acute infectious ophthalmia, and its dangerous complications, and a vast amount of chronic disease resulting from it, often capable of being benefited by Hospital treatment ; many of the former urgently needing it, although they now can only be dealt with in the out-patient department."

Until the end of last year all the professional work and much of the routine detail passed through the hands of Dr. Cant ; and he and Mrs. Cant seemed much over-worked. I understand that an assistant has been sent out this year, but even with this addition the Hospital will not be able to deal with the great amount of eye disease throughout the country.

The Home and School for Blind Girls is the outcome of a Day School for the Blind, opened in April, 1896, by an American Missionary, Miss Ford. Two of the blind girls, Armenians, lost their parents and became homeless, and it was found necessary to provide them with a home. A small house was hired and

friends came forward to help with gifts of furniture and clothing, and with subscriptions. In the spring of this year there were ten blind girls in the Home, not including an English blind girl who assists in teaching, all that could be taken in with the small sum available, £133. One of the Armenian girls has obtained a position as servant, and is doing well, the other does much of the housework and washing at the Home. One girl now reads Arabic Braille very fluently and has learned to read and write English Braille. A day pupil, who has attended the school from the commencement, is able to copy Braille books, and assist in teaching Arabic Braille. Another girl, after learning to read, returned to her home, where she reads books lent to her. The progress of the pupils, considering their age and the fact that they had not learned to read before, is excellent, and is greatly to the credit of Miss Lovell, who superintends the Home. The Braille paper and apparatus have to be obtained from England, and besides the initial cost and postage, there are heavy Custom House fees at Jaffa. The writing of books in Braille is therefore very expensive, and funds are greatly needed to supply the pupils with reading matter.

Several ladies in England and one in Hebron are writing Arabic Braille. One of the ladies had the Epistles of St. John and to the Ephesians stereotyped at her own expense and twelve copies reached the Home at Christmas. Another lady has written out and sent St. Luke's Gospel. In connection with the Home there is a Bible Class for blind women; and blind girls are taught such industrial occupations as re-seating chairs, &c.

Although the Home is on a small scale it is doing good work under Miss Lovell, and giving a useful object lesson to the Turks and to the various Christian communities at Jerusalem. I was much pleased with my visit to it. The children looked clean, bright and happy; and I trust it may only be the commencement of a much larger undertaking. Since my visit to Jerusalem, Miss Lovell has been obliged to vacate her house and occupy another not quite so suitable. Such changes are almost unavoidable when occupying hired houses under the existing conditions at Jerusalem.

There are excellent British Hospitals at Tiberias, Nazareth and Damascus, and resident British surgeons at other places, as well as French, German, Jewish and Russian Hospitals, at nearly all of which, cases of eye disease are attended to. This must in time have a very considerable effect on the percentage of blind in the population.

THE NATIONAL BLIND RELIEF SOCIETY.

To those charitable souls whose hearts and purses have answered to the appeals made for the above Society, it must be interesting to know how it sprung into being, and the steps of its steady growth; while to learn how much suffering it has alleviated, is alleviating, and if it is given the chance will alleviate, may stimulate the latent pity of those who have hitherto turned a deaf ear, or no ear at all to its earnest askings for help. The truth, whose strangeness and yet beauty must have struck us all, that out of the misfortunes of one, the Power above us, often evolves the welfare of many, is exemplified in the birth of this Institution. It was born in an auspicious year, 1837, born of a private and solitary agony. In that year a luckless tradesman of London, a manufacturer of Congreve matches, had his sight burnt away by an explosion of the material employed. Deprived of his eyes, his livelihood went too; his friends—they must have been but indifferent ones—followed. Moved by compassion for this triple and overwhelming catastrophe, a little knot of good-hearted men—perhaps they may still be permitted to hear echoes of the blessings that pursue them—joined hands; and collecting or subscribing the necessary funds made and christened the Blind Relief Society. In 1841 it was still but a baby; but its use and helpfulness must have already made themselves felt, since in that year the hearts of another group of pitiful people burned within them; bidding them stretch out wider arms to embrace a larger circle of the dark and needy. The result was the founding in 1843 of the Christian Blind Relief Society. The change in the

title can scarcely be held an improvement; introducing a limitation where no limitation should be. Of the two branches, of which it originally consisted—the South London Auxiliary, and East London Auxiliary—the former died out in 1862, and the latter reigned alone, but for a Welsh Auxiliary, the Carmarthen and Pembrokeshire. The flourishing or perishing of different limbs of the same enterprise, which had apparently started with an equal stock of vitality and vigour, is one of the many curious phenomena of philanthropy. Happily, in the case of our Society, though some branches withered, in the trunk the sap still ran. The good man, whose fostering care kept life and developed growth in the surviving branch, the East London one—his name was Clarke, and it should not be forgotten—after long years of struggle, fighting with opposition, with the various difficulties and discouragements that beset the resolute helper of his kind in any direction, had to give up his labours; smitten with that very blindness for whose victims he had striven so long and bravely. If we dared ever to say that anything is hard in that web of mysteries by which we are surrounded, we should be inclined to murmur at such a meed, for so noble and selfless a life's toil; but happily, ere the calamity of darkness fell upon the worker, the work was much advanced towards maturity. His wife took the reins from his hands; until—strange and melancholy accident!—her sight also failed. But by that time the Society was so much strengthened and had so much developed that not even this severe blow could kill or even stun it. The public, often slow to recognise a need, but never slow to supply it when realised, had awoke to the existence among them of a startlingly large number of persons afflicted with almost the greatest of human ills, and to whom the only three alternatives open, were the being banished from their homes into asylums, the feeling themselves and being an intolerable burden upon their needy relatives, or starvation! That many warm hearts among us had beat in sympathetic pity for those to whom only so dreary a choice of ills was allotted is sufficiently proved by the fact that the pensioners, who, in 1843 numbered only three, had increased in 1860 to 217; and now in 1900 amount to 668.

It lies with the hearts, hands and pockets of this great British Community of ours to decide whether by 1910 they shall have multiplied fifty or a hundredfold, or wretchedly dwindled to the original three.

RHODA BROUGHTON.

June 25th, 1900.

P.S.—The object of the Society is to give weekly or monthly pensions to the necessitous blind above the age of eighteen, in any part of the United Kingdom, provided they are of good moral character.

The applicants (whose incomes must be less than £20, if single, or £30, if married), are elected without voting according to priority of application.

All candidates must have their forms of application signed by one new subscriber of £1 is. a year, as well as by a life governor.

Immediate pensions can be obtained by special arrangement with the Hon. Sec., the Rev. J. Pullein Thompson, 27, Tite Street, Chelsea, London, S.W., who will gladly give any further information about the Society. The funds are administered by a Committee which meets monthly. The Secretary gives his services, and no office expenses are incurred. The endowment amounts to under £100 a year.

A pamphlet (revised edition), post free 4d., giving information with regard to Institutions, Societies, and Classes for the Blind in England and Wales, published by the Secretary of Gardner's Trust for the Blind, under the sanction of the Committee, can be obtained on application at the office of the Trust, 53, Victoria Street, Westminster, London, S.W.



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